

## Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for December

**SAVOR** the final days of fall foliage on your deciduous trees. As the temperatures drop, the colors become more intense, especially on maples, crape myrtles, liquid ambers and pistache.

**STOMP** mole runs to encourage those burrowers to move on.

**PRUNE** euphorbia to the ground or if it has become invasive, dig out the roots.

**BE ALERT** for yellowjacket nests in the ground. Call Vector Control for eradication. (925) 685-9301.

**REPURPOSE** Thanksgiving gourds by spray painting them in metallic colors of gold silver, bronze, copper, red, green or blue. Use in your holiday décor.

**MAKE** your own Christmas wreaths and garlands with boughs from your redwood, cedar, pine, or other conifer trees. Add berries of holly, cotoneaster, Chinese pistache or pyracantha for a homemade creation.

**DON'T** mow your lawns when it is raining. Wet grass bends over and you'll end up with uneven cuts. Also, mowing when your lawn is soaked will cause ruts, compaction, and even uproot the grass.

**SEASON** wood for at least a year before burning in fireplaces or wood-burning stoves. Green wood is heavy and smokes, doesn't provide heat, and can build up large quantities of creosote which can cause a fire in your chimney. Have your fireplace and chimney inspected and swept at least once per year. Enjoy a fire only on safe days, never on spare-the-air notifications.

**NEVER** burn oleander wood. The smoke is toxic and poisonous. Never use oleander as skewers for meat as this practice can be deadly. Place cut oleander branches in a plastic bag and put it in your trash bin. Remember that all parts of the oleander can be fatal to humans and animals.

**ADD** a whimsical statue to your garden to bring a smile to your guests during inclement weather.

**PLANT** bulbs for spring.

**CLEAN** rain gutters. Add the debris to your compost pile.

**SCATTER** poppy and lupine seeds.

**COME** to 5A Rent-A-Space in Moraga on Saturday, Dec. 14 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. with your children for a Visit with Santa. Be the Star You Are!® volunteers will be on hand to help kids write a letter, and take their photo with St. Nick. Crafts and treats included at this free event. For more information visit: <https://www.bethestaryouare.org/events>

**PICK** Meyer lemons to add zest to your celebratory menus.

**COMBINE** containers of Christmas cactus and cyclamen for a pretty holiday display.



Let firewood and kindling dry for several months before burning.



Christmas cactus and cyclamen make festive holiday bedfellows.



As beautiful as the flowers of oleanders are, the entire plant is poisonous.



Freshly picked Meyer lemons will add zest to holiday menus.